

Recommendations

Every day, more and more customers are choosing to gather information and learn about businesses online. According to Nancy Friedrich, “websites are the face that customers see and know” (Friedrich, 2009). Because websites are seen increasingly as a way to service customers, having a website that is functional, informative, and appealing can help improve a company’s customer count and loyalty. Kids Up Front’s website, according to the usability test, turns off potential customers (both individual and company alike) due to a lack of personalization, prioritizing of information, ease of use, public awareness and how the site is organized. There are also some issues regarding the graphics on the site as well as potential concerns regarding website security. The following are recommendations to remedy these problems.

To begin, the lack of personalization throughout the website is an issue. While personalization may seem to be difficult to achieve through a website, it helps the company connect with its customers. Adding a scrapbook page with pictures of children and their thank you letters would show the impact of a customer’s donation on children in a way that impacts the customer on a personal level. Making an emotional connection with potential customers will help personalize the website and get more people/companies to donate their tickets. Another way of personalizing is to show pictures of staff and facilities, as it gives the potential customer some validity in a company. In other words, people are looking for tangibility in a company, especially when they provide a service instead of an actual product. By instilling in people Kids Up Front’s physical presence, potential customers will be able to trust the company more and feel more connected. Kids Up Front can also add to their presence by keeping their ‘What’s New’ section current as a way to show the number of opportunities customers can get involved in. Another way of connecting with the user is to add a web poll. Kids Up Front is open to the idea of adding

a web poll for children to rate their experiences that can then be viewed by the users of the site. With a web poll, “users are able to interact with the site by providing information that is incorporated into displays...which aims to afford connectedness with the user” (Cyr et al, 2009). Yet another way to personalize the user’s experience is to create a ‘splash page’ in which the user is able to designate what kind of donator they are: individual donator, company, potential partner/sponsor. This web page acts as a kind of ‘pre-introduction’ to the website and Kids Up Front is able to personalize the information according to what function the user wants to fill.

Graphics was another issue brought up by the usability test, mainly due to the lack of visual appeal the site offered. Because the load time for the Kids Up Front website is very fast, adding graphics that would appeal to users would have little impact on load time and would vastly increase the visual appeal of the site. Making a website more attractive is one of the steps that Kids Up Front can take to help lure new customers, a part of the process involved in One-to-One Web-marketing (Goff, 2000).

The next issue is the prioritization and organization of information on the site. According to the usability test, while finding the right page to find the information users needed was easy to do, it took a while for the user to actually find the information on the page. This takes away from the effectiveness of a site, as Ducoffe explains that effectiveness “refers to the quality of information provided and can contribute to user perceived value (of the website)” (Ducoffe, 1996). Finding the right information quickly also adds to the efficiency of the website, as the user is able to easily search for and access the information they desire (Keeney, 1999). By organizing the website so that the most important information is provided first, it makes it easier for the customer to find out more about the company and how they can get involved. When organizing the website, Kids Up Front should put all relevant information together and make it

easy to discern one topic from another. Having a separate page for sponsors and partners, having a FAQ page so that potential customers can get an overall understanding of the company, and fixing broken links on the site can all help Kids Up Front improve their efficiency and effectiveness of their site and take away any frustration a user may have when navigating.

Public awareness is also something that Kids Up Front lacks. Their partners and sponsors do not promote their relationship with Kids Up Front, therefore many companies and individual users looking to donate their tickets would not know how to do so. If Kids Up Front created a means for their partners/sponsors to show their support for the organization, such as providing the Kids Up Front logo with a link that their partners/sponsors could add on their webpage, it would greatly increase the public awareness of the organization and help bring more interested potential customers to the Kids Up Front website.

The last issue deals with security. Kids Up Front is currently planning to provide a means to donate tickets and/or cash online. In order to create a sense of trust in potential customers, Kids Up Front should add a privacy policy detailing how the organization uses customer information as well as a link to Canadahelps.org's privacy policy stating how they secure user payment information and any information regarding the anonymity of donations. By providing a secure environment in which the potential customer feels safe, Kids Up Front will help build 'e-loyalty', defined as "a perceived intention to visit or use a website in the future and to consider purchasing from it in the future" (Cyr et al, 2009). The more comfortable the user feels with the website, the more the user is willing to donate their tickets and/or money to Kids Up Front.

By implementing these ideas into the Kids Up Front website, the organization will be able to grow their company while creating lasting relationships with new and current users alike.

References

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